

Communication Is the Key for Travel Planners

One of the most important parts of booking travel is communication, both between the travel planner and the traveler, and between the travel planner and the State Travel Office. Travel planners, we cannot stress enough how important it is that you **listen to what your traveler is telling you**. This is the first step in communication. Below are other important steps to booking travel:

- * One of the first things travel planners should do is to contact the traveler to obtain a copy of the meeting or conference agenda. The information in the agenda will help you know the exact dates and times your traveler needs to travel. Also check the agenda for registration fees.
- * Check the agenda for hotel information. If there is a conference hotel, the agenda will give you an 800 number to call to make reservations. Some conferences do not book hotels for the meeting, so you should call the travel agents to help you book a hotel close to your meeting. Keep in mind that **if you book an out-of-state non-conference hotel without using the State Travel Office, the employee will be reimbursed only \$65 per night**.
- * Ask if the traveler needs a car. If the traveler is staying at the conference hotel, the State will not pay for a rental car.
- * Ask if the traveler has a frequent flyer number.
- * Book your reservation in advance. This will help travelers obtain the seat assignments they request. If the flight is not showing any seats to assign, look for different options. Use connection flights, or change airlines. Because overbooking by the airlines is becoming a major problem, it is important to be sure that your traveler has an assigned seat.
- * Our travel agent will e-mail the airline ticket to you when the reservation is complete. Check the dates, times, and flights on the itinerary right away. If a correction needs to be made, it can be accomplished the same day you receive the itinerary without a cost to the department.
- * Because it costs your department a \$25 transaction fee every time you issue or change a ticket, it is very important to communicate with the traveler to verify all information **before** issuing a ticket.
- * Once the ticket is issued, the travel planner's job is not finished. Before the flight, check the airline's Web site for time changes or flight number changes and notify the traveler of any new information.

▶ **The
Right
Way.**

Don't Play 'Phone Tag'

One of the goals of the State Travel Office for 2005 is to reduce the number of phone calls made to our office to book travel. Currently, we are receiving an average of six to eight phone calls per ticket issued. Travel planners should be able to do it all in one call. Or better yet, use e-mail instead of calling. This will eliminate the "phone tag" that often occurs and will create a paper trail of communication that can be useful to travelers, travel planners, and travel agents alike. Using e-mail will also speed the process of booking travel reservations.



Send your e-mail request to the State Travel Office, be sure to include the following information: traveler's name and agency; destination city; preferred airport; departure date and time; return date and time; hotel preference (if needed); preferred size of rental car (if needed); meeting location (e.g., hotel name); low org number; travel authorization number (if known); travel planner's name, phone number, and e-mail address; and comments or special requests (e.g., nonsmoking hotel room, vegetarian meal, aisle seat, etc.).

Listed below are the names and e-mail addresses of the State Travel agents:

Mary Marsden

marymarsden@utah.gov

Lynette Saccomanno

lsaccomanno@utah.gov

Kandace Malan

kmalan@utah.gov

Angie Lucas

amackelprang@utah.gov

Tiffany Snowball

tsnowball@utah.gov

Tami Harris

tamiharris@utah.gov

Because it takes time to finalize reservations, we would appreciate it if you would request your reservations as early in the day as possible. ➔

Why Are You Standing In Line?

There is no reason for State of Utah travelers to stand in line to pick up a rental car. Travelers may sign up with Budget Car Rental for their Fastbreak program that eliminates or greatly reduces the amount of time spent waiting to pick up a car at the airport. There is no additional charge to state employees for using this service. It is part of the State's contract with Budget.



Fastbreak express service allows travelers to save time and get on the road quickly without the lines and paperwork. When you complete an on-line profile, you will receive a Budget Customer Number (BCN) at the end of the process. You should provide your BCN to the State Travel Office so our agents can add the number to your Traveler Profile. Then use your BCN when you book your car rental reservations. **State employees who travel on state business are required to reserve and cancel car rentals through the State Travel Office.**

You can access the Budget Fastbreak Express Service on-line enrollment form on our Web site at www.finance.utah.gov/travel/rentalcars.htm. ➔

Full Flights Mean You're More Likely to Get 'Bumped'

Because more people are flying these days and planes are fuller than a year ago, travel experts say that airline passengers currently have a greater chance of getting bumped from a flight than in recent years.



According to an article in *USA Today*, fuller flights make it harder for airlines to accommodate either last-minute fliers who missed prior flights or passengers on flights that have been overbooked. (Airlines sell some seats twice to compensate for passengers who don't show.)

When a flight has too many passengers, gate agents must seek volunteers willing to wait for another flight. If volunteers don't take care of the problem, agents bump passengers involuntarily, usually picking the last to check in. Either way, customers usually receive compensation.

The Department of Transportation provides the following information about trying to avoid being bumped and about what happens if you are bumped.

Try to Avoid Being Bumped

- ✓ Don't be late to the boarding gate. Meet your airline's check-in deadline.
- ✓ If you are told you are being bumped, ask if the gate attendant first sought volunteers. It's required.

If You Are Bumped

- ✓ The airline is required by federal law to compensate you if you show up on time and the airline doesn't have a seat for you. Many carriers offer a free ticket first.
- ✓ If you're flown to your destination within an hour of your original arrival time, the airline is not required to give you anything.
- ✓ If you reach your destination more than one hour but less than two hours late, you're entitled to 100% of your one-way fare, up to a maximum of \$200.
- ✓ If you reach your destination more than two hours late, you're entitled to 200% of your one-way fare, up to a maximum of \$400.
- ✓ There are exceptions. Airlines don't have to pay if they replaced the scheduled airplane with a smaller one. The rules apply only to airlines that fly planes with 60 or more seats. ➔

Delta's New Fares Do Not Affect State Contract Rates

We are monitoring changes in fares and requirements at Delta Airlines to determine if other airlines are following suit and if any of the subsequent changes will affect state travelers. Delta's changes apply only to published fares and will not affect the state contract rates. Watch next month's newsletter for further information. ➔



Be Sure Your New Travelers Are Up to Speed

Editor's Note: With the recent changes in state government personnel, there is no doubt that we will have many new travelers, and possibly even some new travel planners. In an effort to acquaint new employees with the travel rules and procedures, we are reprinting the following information from our September 2004 issue. If you have new travelers, or if your agency has a new travel planner, please give them copies of this article that tells them where to find information about state government travel.



Travel Newsletter

Read the *Travel Update* each month and sign up for the list server that notifies you when a new newsletter is posted to our Web site. Send your name and e-mail address to Teddy Cramer (tcramer@utah.gov) and ask her to subscribe you to the list. Our Web site contains an archive of newsletters that could acquaint new travelers with state rules and procedures for booking travel (www.finance.utah.gov/newsletters/travelupdate.htm).

Web Site

Check the travel information on our Web site (www.finance.utah.gov). Mouse over the *State Travel* button on the left, and then click on one of the topics listed. Information currently posted includes:

- ◆ *Who to Call* – travel office contacts, emergency phone numbers, office hours, office address, etc.
- ◆ *Hotels/Group Facilities* – guidelines for booking in-state hotels, lodging per diem rates, list of conference facilities, and link to in-state lodging database
- ◆ *Caterers* – per diem rates for group events and list of caterers that have previously worked with agencies for per diem rates
- ◆ *FindIt Guide* – informational mini-policy and procedure travel guide
- ◆ *Rental Cars* – contract agencies, insurance coverage, Budget Fastbreak Express Service (a time saver program)
- ◆ *Airport Parking* – maximum allowable parking reimbursement, lots that accept per diem, optional shuttle service rates and procedures
- ◆ *Contracted Airlines* – list of airlines the state has contracted with for flights to specific cities
- ◆ *FAQ* (Frequently Asked Questions) – answers to questions we receive most frequently from travelers and travel planners
- ◆ *Policies and Procedures* – travel, vehicles, groups, corporate card, etc.
- ◆ *Forms* – travel-related forms, including the Request for Out of State Travel Authorization, Private Vehicle Reimbursement Request, Travel Reimbursement Request, and Travel Quotation Bid Sheet

Call Us

If you have questions not answered on the Web site, contact State Travel Administrator Diann Donoviel at 801-538-3103 or ddonoviel@utah.gov; or Travel Coordinator Tami Nelson at 801-538-3109 or taminelson@utah.gov. ➔